

Ice Safety

More than one million anglers fish through the ice each winter in Michigan. Ice fishing offers a great winter recreational opportunity, but if you do go out on the ice, always observe these safety guidelines:

- Before venturing out onto the ice, check with local sources for the most up-to-date information on ice conditions.
- Do not go out on any ice unless you test the thickness and quality with a spud first.
- Pay attention to wind direction especially when fishing on large bodies of waters. If the wind direction is just right, it can blow the ice out and away from shore leaving anglers stranded.
- Be especially cautious in areas where air temperatures have fluctuated or heavy snowfall has occurred in recent days.
- Be especially wary of river ice, as it can be highly variable in thickness due to the erosive action of the underlying river current. Also, avoid ice formed over flowing water near shore, around inlets and outlets of rivers and streams, off points of land, near docks or on lakes with springs.
- Avoid aeration devices, such as warmwater bubblers used near marinas.
- Stay away from structures, docks or pilings in the ice.
- Wear a personal floatation device. Also, carry a couple of large nails and a length of nylon rope. If you should go through the ice, the nails could help provide a grip on the slippery surface and aid in getting you out.
- If you do break through the ice, try not to panic. Remember to turn toward the direction you came from -- toward the ice that supported you. Use the nails or your hands to gain a hold on the unbroken surface as an aid in getting out.
- Once you are out of the water and are lying on the ice, don't stand. Roll away from the point where you broke through until you are on solid ice.
- If you see someone fall through the ice, do not run toward the person. Carefully extend a rope, ladder, pole or line to the victim.
- Always get the victim to a hospital emergency room as soon as possible for treatment.